

Paul Farrow  
County Executive



Allison Bussler  
Director

## WAUKESHA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

September 19, 2018

### VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, District of Columbia 20554

*RE: Accelerating Wireline Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment, WC Docket No. 17-84; Accelerating Wireless Broadband Deployment by Removing Barriers to Infrastructure Investment, WT Docket No. 17-79*

Dear Ms. Dortch,

Waukesha County writes to express our concerns over the Federal Communications Commission's proposed Declaratory Ruling and Third Report and Order regarding state and local governance of small cell wireless infrastructure deployment. Our county, the state's 3rd largest, is located in southeastern Wisconsin. It includes 37 municipalities within 576 square miles of suburban and rural areas. Waukesha County is one of Wisconsin's fastest growing counties, with 389,891 residents identified in the 2010 US Census.

While we share the Commission's objective of finding new ways to effectively deploy broadband technologies, especially in underserved communities, we are concerned that the proposed language would significantly impede local governments' ability to serve as trustees of public property, safety and welfare. Counties own substantial amounts of public rights-of-way, which many communication providers use to construct their own communications networks. The proposed order would significantly narrow the amount of time for local governments to evaluate 5G deployment applications from communication providers – effectively hindering our ability to fulfill public health and safety responsibilities during the construction and modification of broadcasting facilities.

- **The FCC's proposed new collocation shot clock category is too extreme.** The proposal designates any preexisting structure, regardless of its design or suitability for attaching wireless equipment, as eligible for this new expedited 60 day shot clock. When paired with the FCC's previous decision exempting small wireless facilities from federal historic and environmental review, this places an unreasonable burden on local governments to prevent historic preservation, environmental, or safety harms to the community. The addition of up to three cubic feet of antenna and 28 cubic feet of additional equipment to a structure not originally designed to carry that equipment is substantial and may necessitate more review than the FCC has allowed in its proposal.
- **The FCC's proposed definition of "effective prohibition" is overly broad.** The draft report and order proposes a definition of "effective prohibition" that invites challenges to long-standing local rights of way requirements unless they meet a subjective and unclear set of guidelines. While the Commission

may have intended to preserve local review, this framing and definition of effective prohibition opens local governments to the likelihood of more, not less, conflict and litigation over requirements for aesthetics, spacing, and undergrounding.

- **The FCC's proposed recurring fee structure is an unreasonable overreach that will harm local policy innovation.** We disagree with the FCC's interpretation of "fair and reasonable compensation" as meaning approximately \$270 per small cell site. Local governments share the federal government's goal of ensuring affordable broadband access for every American, regardless of their income level or address. That is why many cities have worked to negotiate fair deals with wireless providers, which may exceed that number or provide additional benefits to the community. Additionally, the Commission has moved away from rate regulation in recent years. Why does it see fit to so narrowly dictate the rates charged by municipalities?

We have first-hand experience with utilities and/or their subcontractors that have inappropriately installed infrastructure in the public right-of-way that has created dangerous situations, such as inadequate (or complete absence of) traffic control during installation and subsequent maintenance of their infrastructure. In addition, we have experienced the private sector installing utilities and then leaving the public right-of-way in an unsatisfactory condition such as improper grading or neglecting to replant disturbed vegetation. It is important that local government maintain the authority to adequately monitor and regulate the use of their taxpayer's right-of-way. In order to do that, we need adequate time to review proposals and permits, develop agreements, and inspect installation in the field. This is especially important when developing an initial agreement with a small cell provider. Additionally, local government should be able to recoup any financial impact to local taxpayers due to the deployment of 5G. If the FCC places an arbitrary cap on these fees, you are potentially creating a situation where you are mandating local government subsidize the telecommunications industry.

Our county has worked with private business to build the best broadband infrastructure possible for our residents. We oppose this effort to restrict local authority and stymie local innovation, while limiting the obligations providers have to our community. We urge you to oppose this declaratory ruling and report and order.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul Farrow". The signature is stylized with a large, looping "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

PAUL FARROW  
Waukesha County Executive